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**Information Literacy Action Plan**

Aspects of information literacy are taught inconsistently throughout my school, Parkside Junior High School (PJHS). Internet safety and website evaluation are touched upon in the Digital Media course that some students take. In completing research projects across disciplines, students are exposed to some research instruction. Due to flexible scheduling and no additional IMC employees, our Library Media Specialist (LMS) is only able to give limited explicit instruction in information literacy. Communication is poor between content areas, core subject area teams, and teachers. Teachers assume that students are receiving instruction on accessing and evaluating information in another class, so they do not spend adequate time teaching students the necessary skills for inquiry or problem-based learning and research. No one is really aware of what is being taught when and where, so there are many gaps in students’ information literacy instruction. Possessing information literacy skills is crucial for academic success and for many social and emotional endeavors that students will choose in the future as lifelong learners.

Being information literate is essential to student success because it enables them to problem-solve and find answers in many areas of life. Students should be able to identify when they need information and how important the information is. They should be able to locate, evaluate, and effectively use the information they find. Effectively using information includes incorporating it into their schema. Ultimately, students must be able to use the information they find to accomplish their purpose. In our current society, this may prove more difficult than ever before. Technology is rapidly changing and is electronic information. Young people are technologically-savvy, thus giving them a false sense of aptitude when researching. Because students can find information quickly, they assume it is of good quality, useful for their purposes, and ethically acceptable to use. Often, this is not the case. Moreover, exorbitant amounts of resources now exist in multiple media formats for locating information, making the evaluation and comprehension of these resources even more difficult (APA, 1998). Students must be explicitly taught steps, methods, and strategies for finding, evaluating, and ethically using information.

The PJHS School Improvement Plan has been to “build a literate community” for many years. The school district’s focus has also been on literacy as they added an extra language arts course to the middle school curriculum, hired literacy specialists to work with every school, and implemented comprehension focus groups to perform reading interventions for struggling readers. The addition of teaching information literacy skills will support the district’s goals. Another focus of the district is on the adoption of the Common Core Standards. Many teachers are overwhelmed by the high expectations and change that these standards demand. Information literacy instruction greatly supports the Common Core Standards for Reading Information Text: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Writing: Text Types and Purposes, Research to Build and Present Knowledge, Production and Distribution of Writing, and Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration.

In order to meet this need, I will give a presentation to the PJHS staff at one of our opening institutes in August discussing information literacy and the school-wide adoption of The Big 6 Guide to Problem-Solving. Prior to this presentation, I will meet with my principal and LMS. I will share all of the information that I will present to my staff with them, including the information literacy definition, skills, and how it addresses the Common Core Standards, The Big 6 Guide to Problem-Solving, plan for implementation, and resources. I have no doubt that they will support my action plan and agree to my presenting at the opening institute. I will present a 30-minute presentation to my staff on the SMART Board using Power Point. To pique teachers’ interest and make them aware of what they do and do not know about information literacy and its implementation in our school, I will use polleverywhere.com to ask three important questions:

1. Information literacy is students’ ability to…
2. recognize when information is needed and locate, evaluate, and effectively use it.
3. read with fluency and comprehension.
4. interpret what they hear in the media.

1. How well do you implement information literacy into your teaching?
   1. I have no idea how to implement it.
   2. I try to address it when I can.
   3. I purposefully implement it into my curriculum often.
2. Are information literacy skills being taught across the curriculum using common methods,

expectations, and language?

* 1. Yes
  2. Somewhat
  3. No

My staff likes seeing instant results to polls and surveys, and it is fun to text in responses. Upon revealing the results, tables will have two minutes to discuss them as well as the question, “What are some obstacles preventing our students from being information literate?” Each table will then share out their initial thoughts, and whoever shares will receive candy. I will then go over the definition of information literacy as well as what information literate students should be able to do.

I will then discuss how information literacy supports the PJHS School Improvement Plan of “building a literate community,” because information literacy addresses many Common Core Standards. In sharing how information literacy lines up with the Common Core Reading and Writing Standards, this will make it more valid in the eyes of my staff. Next, I will share my proposal to implement the Big 6 Skills across the curriculum and the goal to improve student and teacher awareness and use of the Big 6 Skills throughout the 2013-2014 school year. Teachers will each receive a resource folder including two Big 6 skills sheets, a Big 6 Instructional Unit Design template, Big 6 classroom posters for each skill, a chart showing which skill to implement each quarter, and the 5 W’s of Website Evaluation. I will project a graphic outlining the Big 6 and talk through each skill. I will then ask teachers to list a project, lesson, or unit in which they already address a skill. They will then have two minutes to discuss their thoughts as a table. Volunteers who share out with everyone will receive candy. This will hopefully show teachers that they are already incorporating some of these skills in their teaching, but The Big 6 provides a method and common language for staff to use, which makes a greater impact on students.

Next, I will take teachers to the website: <http://www.janetsinfo.com/big6info.htm>. This website lays the Big 6 out in a detailed chart with links for everything. It lists the skill, AASL Standards, NETS, basic activities to use with students, and advanced activities. For example, you can click on “Task Definition,” which leads you to a detailed description of the skill. You could then click on “Concept Mapping” under Basic Activities, which takes you to information and examples of concept maps. This is an incredibly useful resource. Next, I will ask teachers to look at the resources in their resource folder. I will walk them through the instructional unit design template and show them the 5 W’s of Website Evaluation that can be used when teaching Information Seeking Strategies. And finally, I will point out the cardstock posters for each of the Big 6 Skills that can be displayed in classrooms. These are great reinforcement for students and teachers. For example, the Task Definition poster includes 2 questions clarifying the meaning of this skill: “What’s the task?” and “What types of information do I need?”

I will then display information about our goals and timeline. The goals of this action plan are to have school-wide use of the Big 6 Skills and for teachers and students to have a strong understanding of the Big 6 upon completion of the 2013-2014 school year. Looking at the timeline, I will discuss which skills should be focused on for which quarter. Quarter one will be Task Definition, quarter two will be Information Seeking Strategies and Location and Access, quarter three will be Use of Information, and quarter four will be Synthesis and Evaluation. Time will be allotted at monthly faculty meetings for collaboration with colleagues. This time will serve as an opportunity for sharing issues and successes in implementing the Big 6. At this point, I will have teachers do a five-minute think-pair-share to brainstorm when and how they might incorporate task definition into a lesson or unit they plan to do first quarter. This will help them to start looking ahead at planning and implementation. They may also glean some good ideas from their partners in how to do this, and hopefully the conversation will continue after the professional development day. I will end with thanking them so much for their attention and participation and letting them know that the principal, LMS, and I are available to help with questions, concerns, and ideas. I will encourage them that they are quite capable of taking the Big 6 one skill at a time, and we are in this together to improve our students’ information literacy skills.

I am confident that my fellow teachers will recognize the need for quality and consistent information literacy instruction and for implementing The Big 6 across the curriculum. The preparation that I did in providing a specific method, The Big 6, for incorporating information technology into the curriculum will make the action plan more feasible. I provided a timeline for implementing one or two strategies per quarter, which is very attainable. Being handed many useful resources, such as The Big 6 Skills sheet, the unit planning template, classroom posters for each of the skills, and links for The Big 6 websites allows teachers to start the process feeling equipped with materials. Setting aside time at monthly faculty meetings assures teachers the opportunity for sharing concerns, resources, and great ideas. There is a support system in place. However, there may inevitably be some resistance. Currently, teachers are inundated with programs and methods, paper work, and too much to do. It is likely that some teachers will be overwhelmed by the action plan or view it as “just one more thing to do.” Some content area teachers may not believe that The Big 6 is applicable to their content area. They may not do a lot of problem-based learning or research in their classes, so they may not buy in to the plan at first. I think that the key players in giving credibility to the Big 6 and this action plan are the building principal and the LMS. If the principal emphasizes the importance of this plan and shows support for it and our teachers during the learning process, teachers will “get on board.” The LMS can serve as a great resource. Incorporating the Big 6 across the curriculum could be a great opportunity for collaboration between teachers and the LMS. As an expert in information literacy, she will have ideas for lessons and resources. In my ten years of teaching, no one has ever addressed information literacy despite the fact that it has become more and more vital to our students’ success. Teachers will be enlightened about information literacy and the Big 6 as a result of this presentation, and that is impactful. The implementation of the Big 6 across the curriculum will be a success if everyone is optimistic, communicates openly, is supportive, and collaborates with one another. If those factors occur, students will reap the benefits by becoming information literate.

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**References**

Big 6 Resources:

<http://big6.com>

<http://www.janetsinfo.com/big6info.htm>

Common Core Standards:

<http://www.islma.org/pdf-ISAIL/8th%20ISAIL%202011.pdf>

Information Literacy definition and information: <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/informationliteracycompetency#ildef>